

the United States in his remarks accompanying the signing of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 2000bb et seq.);

Whereas for countless people of the United States, faith is an integral part of every aspect of daily life and is not limited to their homes, houses of worship, or doctrinal creeds;

Whereas “religious faith has inspired many of our fellow citizens to help build a better Nation” in which “people of faith continue to wage a determined campaign to meet needs and fight suffering”, as expressed by the 43rd President of the United States in his Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 2003;

Whereas “from its birth to this day, the United States has prized this legacy of religious freedom and honored this heritage by standing for religious freedom and offering refuge to those suffering religious persecution”, as noted in section 2(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401(a));

Whereas Thomas Jefferson wrote—

(1) in 1798 that each right encompassed in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution is dependent on the other rights described in that Amendment, “thereby guarding in the same sentence, and under the same words, the freedom of religion, of speech, and of the press: insomuch, that whatever violated either, throws down the sanctuary which covers the others”; and

(2) in 1822 that the constitutional freedom of religion is “the most inalienable and sacred of all human rights”;

Whereas religious freedom “has been integral to the preservation and development of the United States”, and “the free exercise of religion goes hand in hand with the preservation of our other rights”, as expressed by the 41st President of the United States in his Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 1993; and

Whereas we “continue to proclaim the fundamental right of all peoples to believe and worship according to their own conscience, to affirm their beliefs openly and freely, and to practice their faith without fear or intimidation”, as expressed by the 42nd President of the United States in his Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 1998: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) on Religious Freedom Day on January 16, 2017, honors the 231st anniversary of the enactment of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom; and

(2) affirms that—

(A) for individuals of any faith and individuals of no faith, religious freedom includes the right of an individual to live, work, associate, and worship in accordance with the beliefs of the individual;

(B) all people of the United States can be unified in supporting religious freedom, regardless of differing individual beliefs, because religious freedom is a fundamental human right; and

(C) “the American people will remain forever unshackled in matters of faith”, as expressed by the 44th President of the United States in his Presidential proclamation on Religious Freedom Day in 2012.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have two requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 17, 2017, at 2:15 p.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 17, 2017, at 5 p.m., in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled “Nomination of Betsy DeVos to serve as Secretary of Education.”

REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY—TREATY DOCUMENT NOS. 115-1 AND 115-2

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the injunction of secrecy be removed from the following treaties transmitted to the Senate on January 17, 2017, by the President of the United States: Extradition Treaty with the Republic of Serbia, Treaty Document No. 115-1; Extradition Treaty with the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, Treaty Document No. 115-2. I further ask that the treaties be considered as having been read the first time; that they be referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed; and that the President’s messages be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The messages of the President are as follows:

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Serbia (the “Treaty”), signed at Belgrade on August 15, 2016. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty would replace the Treaty between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Serbia for the Mutual Extradition of Fugitives from Justice, signed October 25, 1901 (the “1901 Treaty”), which applies to the Republic of Serbia as a successor state to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Treaty follows generally the form and content of other extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States. It would replace an outmoded list of extraditable of-

fenses with a modern “dual criminality” approach, which would enable extradition for such offenses as money laundering, cyber-related crimes, and other newer offenses not appearing on the 1901 Treaty list. The Treaty also provides that extradition shall not be refused based on the nationality of the person sought and contains a modernized “political offense” clause. Finally, the Treaty incorporates a series of procedural improvements to streamline and expedite the extradition process.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 17, 2017.

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo (the “Treaty”), signed at Pristina on March 29, 2016. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty would replace the Treaty between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Serbia for the Mutual Extradition of Fugitives from Justice, signed October 25, 1901 (the “1901 Treaty”), which applies to the Republic of Kosovo as a successor state to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Treaty follows generally the form and content of other extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States. It would replace an outmoded list of extraditable offenses with a modern “dual criminality” approach, which would enable extradition for such offenses as money laundering, cyber-related crimes, and other newer offenses not appearing on the 1901 Treaty list. The Treaty also provides that extradition shall not be refused based on the nationality of the person sought and contains a modernized “political offense” clause. Finally, the Treaty incorporates a series of procedural improvements to streamline and expedite the extradition process.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 17, 2017.

TALENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 39, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 39) to amend title 5, United States Code, to codify the Presidential Innovation Fellows Program, and for other purposes.